

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. The amendment filed on 02/02/2010 has been entered.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments filed 02/02/2010 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

35 USC 101 arguments:

At page 16 second paragraph applicant addresses the 35 USC 101 rejection set forth in the office action mailed on 10/09/2009 by making reference to the amendment to claim 17. Applicant amended claim 17 to claim in the extra-solution detecting step "by using a scanner to scan a document" which extra-solution detecting step does not limit the digital image processing method steps to a particular machine, thus, the detecting step amendment does not overcome the 35 USC 101 rejection set forth in the office action mailed on 10/09/2009.

35 USC 112 second paragraph arguments:

At pages 16 and 17 applicant addresses the 35 USC 112 second paragraph rejection set forth in the office action mailed on 10/09/2009 by asserting step 101 the "means for detecting a user selection" relates to step 101 - at least in the disclosed embodiment. However, as set forth above, the claims are not limited to the preferred disclosed embodiments.". However, as asserted by applicant "the claims are not limited to the preferred disclosed embodiments" and previously asserted by the Examiner in the

office action mailed on 10/09/2009 the claims do cover more than step 101 and cover step 101, step 102, the step before step 101, and step 103 as set forth in the second paragraph rejection set forth below. Thus, applicants arguments alone are not persuasive to overcome the 35 USC 112 second paragraph rejection set forth in the office action mailed on 10/09/2009.

Thus, the 35 USC 101 and 112 second paragraph rejections set forth in the office action mailed on 10/09/2009 are maintained and reproduced below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

3. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

4. Claims 17, 24-26, 30, and 44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Method claims 17, 24-26, 30, and 44:

Supreme Court precedent¹ and recent Federal Circuit decisions² indicate that a statutory "process" under 35 U.S.C. 101 must (1) be tied to another statutory category (such as a particular apparatus), or (2) transform underlying subject matter (such as an article or material) to a different state or thing. While the instant claim(s) recite a series of steps or acts to be performed, the claim(s) neither transform underlying subject

¹ *Diamond v. Diehr*, 450 U.S. 175, 184 (1981); *Parker v. Flook*, 437 U.S. 584, 588 n.9 (1978); *Gottschalk v. Benson*, 409 U.S. 63, 70 (1972); *Cochrane v. Deener*, 94 U.S. 780, 787-88 (1876).

² *In re Bilski*, 88 USPQ2d 1385 (Fed. Cir. 2008).

matter nor positively tie to another statutory category that accomplishes the claimed method steps, and therefore do not qualify as a statutory process.

The August 24, 2009 interim patent subject matter eligibility examination instructions sets forth a 35 USC 101 analysis which analysis renders these claims patent ineligible because the method steps are not tied to a particular machine. The instructions may be viewed at: http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/dapp/opla/2009-08-25_interim_101_instructions.pdf.

These method claims do not tie the method to 1) a particular apparatus because the actor of these steps may be the human operator who performs the claimed abstract mathematical steps or 2) transform underlying subject matter because no physical transformation is claimed.

The 02/02/2010 amendment amended claim 17 to claim in the extra-solution detecting step "by using a scanner to scan a document" which extra-solution detecting step does not limit the digital image processing method steps to a particular machine, thus, the detecting step amendment does not satisfy the machine or transformation test.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

5. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

6. Claims 1, 3-9, 11-15, 17-34, and 42-47 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Independent claims 1, 3, 5, 9, 11, 13, 17, 27, 32, and 33:

The detecting portion of these claims may be interpreted to cover different steps of applicants specification and by drafting the claimed detecting to cover different steps the claims do not distinctly point out the invention. Independent claims 1, 3, and 5 claim "means for detecting a user selection", independent claims 9, 11, and 13 claim "detect a user selection" step, independent claim 17 claims a step of "detecting a user selection", independent claim 27 claims "a detection circuit for detecting a user selection", and independent claims 32 and 33 claim a "circuit for: detecting a user selection". The specification describes several different steps that perform the claimed function such as step 101, step 102, the step before step 101, and step 103. The specification at page 9 lines 3-11 describes step S101 as executing "pre-scan" and "main scan" which scans the document which detects the mark placed on the document by the user. The specification at page 9 lines 12-19 describes step S102 "In step 102, a determination is made as to whether or not a mark has been detected in the pre-scan image data.". The specification at page 9 lines 19-23 describes a step before 101 "This mark is added to the document by the user beforehand using a marker such as a felt-tip pen or the like. The user marks at least an area containing a headline and body text corresponding to the headline.". The specification at page 9 line 24 to page 10 line 3 describes step S103 "In step S103, a screen inviting the user to attach a mark to the document is displayed on the touch panel display of the operation unit 140. In this case the user appends a mark on the document, and the document block extraction process is again executed." In view of MPEP 2173.03 and 2173.05(a)(I) at page 2100-220 Original

Eighth Edition, August 2001 Latest Revision July 2008, the means or steps of the specification covered by the above quoted claim limitations is unclear due to the detecting of the claims covering more than one of the different steps described in the specification.

2173.03 Inconsistency Between Claim *and< Specification Disclosure or Prior Art [R-1] [R-1]

Although the terms of a claim may appear to be definite, inconsistency with the specification disclosure or prior art teachings may make an otherwise definite claim take on an unreasonable degree of uncertainty. *In re Cohn*, 438 F.2d 989, 169 USPQ 95 (CCPA 1971); *In re Hammack*, 427 F.2d 1378, 166 USPQ 204 (CCPA 1970). In *Cohn*, the claim was directed to a process of treating a surface with a corroding solution until the metallic appearance is supplanted by an "opaque" appearance. Noting that no claim may be read apart from and independent of the supporting disclosure on which it is based, the court found that the description, definitions and examples set forth in the specification relating to the appearance of the surface after treatment were inherently inconsistent and rendered the claim indefinite.

2173.05(a) New Terminology [R-3]

I. THE MEANING OF EVERY TERM SHOULD BE APPARENT

The meaning of every term used in a claim should be apparent from the prior art or from the specification and drawings at the time the application is filed. Applicants need not confine themselves to the terminology used in the prior art, but are required to make clear and precise the terms that are used to define the invention whereby the metes and bounds of the claimed invention can be ascertained. During patent examination, the pending claims must be given the broadest reasonable interpretation consistent with the specification. *In re Morris*, 127 F.3d 1048, 1054, 44 USPQ2d 1023, 1027 (Fed. Cir. 1997); *In re Prater*, 415 F.2d 1393, 162 USPQ 541 (CCPA 1969). See also MPEP § 2111 - § 2111.01. When the specification states the meaning that a term in the claim is intended to have, the claim is examined using that meaning, in order to achieve a complete exploration of the applicant's invention and its relation to the prior art. *In re Zletz*, 893 F.2d 319, 13 USPQ2d 1320 (Fed. Cir. 1989).

Also Refer to the September 2, 2008 John Love memo "Indefiniteness rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph" discussed above in the response to arguments section of this office action.

The dependent claims of these claims do not correct this issue.

Independent claims 1, 3, 5, and 17:

Independent claims 1, 3, and 5 claim "means for detecting a user selection" and claim 17 claims a step of "detecting a user selection". Claim elements "means for detecting a user selection" and claim 17 claims a step of "detecting a user selection" is a means (or step) plus function limitation that invokes 35 U.S.C. 112, sixth paragraph. However, the written description fails to clearly link or associate the disclosed structure, material, or acts to the claimed function such that one of ordinary skill in the art would recognize what structure, material, or acts perform the claimed function for the same reasons given above for this applications different steps that perform the claimed function such as step 101, step 102, the step before step 101, and step 103. Refer to the September 2, 2008 John Love memo discussed above "Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, when examining means (or step) plus function claim limitations under 35 U.S.C. 112, sixth paragraph" item III" in the response to arguments section of this office action.

The dependent claims of these claims do not correct this issue.

Conclusion

7. Kurosawa teaches at column 1 lines 29-36 a step similar to applicants step S102 and S103 and Bloomberg teaches a step similar to applicants step S101.
8. An analysis of the claimed invention with regard to the prior art will be held in abeyance until the claimed invention has been clarified since the metes and bounds of

the claims are not definite. Thus, a prior art rejection or an indication of allowability cannot be made with the currently pending claims. In re Steele, 305 F.2d 859,134 USPQ 292 (CCPA 1962) (it is improper to rely on speculative assumptions regarding the meaning of a claim and then base a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103 on these assumptions).

9. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jeffery A. Brier whose telephone number is (571) 272-7656. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F from 7:30 to 4:00. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Xiao Wu can be reached at (571) 272-7761. The fax phone Number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/Jeffery A. Brier/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2628